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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 003332

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA AND EUR

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SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/EU/BANGLADESH: BAN OF AHMADIYA
PUBLICATIONS

REF: STATE 271437

Classified By: POL Counselor Andrew Schofer for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

(C) Poloff delivered reftel points to Wilfred Mohr, Head of MFA's Southern Asia Division, and Dicky Methorst, Deputy Head. In response to the demarche, Methorst noted that EU Heads of Mission in Dhaka recently made a public visit to Ahmadiya mosque as a sign of solidarity, and that this visit had received significant media attention. Methorst described the High Court stay of the gazetting of the ban on Ahmadiya publications as a "positive sign" suggesting that the High Court "is still rather independent." Since the matter remains in court, however, the Dutch do not consider the timing appropriate to send a message. He noted the Dutch will follow the matter closely and "when need arises in January" will be ready to join with a similar message, although by that time the EU Presidency will have already passed to Luxembourg.
SOBEL